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PLANT PEST INFORMATION UPDATES
July 1985

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U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ)

NEW PEST ADVISORY GROUP (NPAG)
PLANT PEST ACTIVITY FROM APRIL THROUGH JUNE 1985

NEW PLANT PESTS

No identifications of new plant pests were confirmed for the NPAG this quarter.

UPDATES ON ACTIONS AGAINST NEW PESTS

MEDITERRANEAN FRUIT FLY BATTLE RENEWED

New finds of Mediterranean fruit fly, Ceratitidis capitata (Wiedemann); Diptera: Tephritidae, were made in Dade County, Florida, on April 9, 1985. Two mature males were trapped in Miami in a calamondin tree 4 km from the site of the unmated female trapped on February 25 (Plant Pest Information Updates (PPIU)--April 1985). The site of male recovery has been routinely trapped for months. No other wild C. capitata adults or larvae were detected as of July 1.

Bait sprays were applied through May 5. Delimiting trapping was then changed to trapping for monitoring purposes in the sterile release area (core and adjacent area totaling 171 sq km. Releases of sterile flies were first made on May 7 and scheduled weekly for 10 weeks.

NEW CITRUS CANCER SITE

A new infestation site for the bacterium-inciting citrus canker, Xanthomonas campestris pv. citri (Hasse) Dye, was confirmed in Florida on April 12, 1985, in a nursery at Valrico, Hillsborough County. Citrus canker was previously detected in Indian River, Manatee, Collier, Hendry, Highlands, and Polk Counties (PPIU--January 1985).

All movement of plant material from this nursery was suspended on April 8. All plant material was destroyed by May 20. Decontamination was completed on May 17. Tracing and destruction of exposed plant material sent intra- and interstate continue.

Rural and urban residential and grove surveys, delimiting surveys around infected nurseries, and nursery surveys proceeded statewide.

ORIENTAL FRUIT FLY ERADICATED FROM LOS ANGELES COUNTY

The quarantine area for oriental fruit fly, Dacus dorsalis Hendel (Diptera: Tephritidae), in Los Angeles County, California, was deregulated, and eradication declared on April 9, 1985. The last find was made on November 14, 1984.

Delimiting trapping and fruit cutting continue with negative results in the Redlands recovery area of San Bernardino County on January 22, 1985 (PPIU--April 1985). One sexually mature male was recovered on May 23 on Coronado Island, a residential area of San Diego County; delimiting trapping and fruit cutting were negative at this new site.

HONEY BEE TRACHEAL MITE QUARANTINE REVOKED

APHIS revoked the Federal quarantine for honey bee tracheal mite, Acarapis woodi (Rennie), Acari: Tarsonemidae, effective on April 16, 1985. APHIS considered the following factors in the decision to revoke: (1) the mites are believed to be widespread -- a. the mite is now present in 17 States, b. beekeepers with infested hives have shipped bees to many States, and c. infested hives have been moved through many States; (2) eradication is not possible; and (3) no practical method exists to certify that bees are free of this mite.

MELON FLY IN CALIFORNIA

One melon fly, Dacus cucurbitae Coquillett (Diptera: Tephritidae), was trapped in California in Pasadena, Los Angeles County, on June 21, 1985. The sexually immature female was recovered from a McPhail trap on a peach tree in a residential area with abundant hosts. Trapping density was increased in a 430-sq-km area around the find. Fruit cutting was begun.

WESTERN LARCH SUSCEPTIBLE TO NEEDLECAST OF EUROPEAN LARCH

Mycosphaerella laricina (Hartig) (Ascomycetes: Dothideales: Mycosphaerellaceae), a needlecast of European larch, was first identified in the United States in 1981 on European larch, Larix decidua. Infestations in Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin were reported in PPIU--September 1982. Repeated early defoliation in Germany weakens larches and may reduce yield.

Deputy Administrator H. L. Ford (PPQ) determined on April 14, 1983, that PPQ would take action if western larch (Larix occidentalis), one of the important U.S. tree species for lumber, pulpwood, and windbreaks, was susceptible (PPIU--January 1984). R. M. Peterson, Forest Service (FS), USDA, stated on January 30, 1985, that field tests showed western larch was susceptible. Heavy infections and defoliation occurred in one growing season. Further studies are underway.

With this new information, the NPAG reconvened on April 25, 1985, to develop recommendations on actions for PPQ to take against M. laricina. The following points were pertinent to the recommendations.

1. Other needlecast disease symptoms could mask symptoms of M. laricina in other areas of the United States.
- 2-3. Actual distribution of M. laricina in the United States is uncertain. M. laricina was recently detected in another State (near Burlington in Vermont) in 1983.
- 4-6. Pathways for spread include nursery stock, research materials, and seed with needle debris. M. laricina is probably not seedborne but no studies have been conducted. Probably little nursery stock moves from the eastern to the western United States.
7. Dithane is used to control M. laricina in Japan.

The recommendations and an analysis were submitted to Mr. Ford on May 23, 1985. The analysis revealed these results.

- 1-2. Potential pest threat to the U.S. agricultural economy is expected to be low, but the threat to larch production is estimated to be moderate to high. National forests in the western United States are threatened.
3. The presence of M. laricina has restricted no U.S. exports to date.
4. Biological and practical factors allow positive action.
5. Coordination among PPQ, FS, and State Agricultural Officials is needed to most effectively manage the pest.

ANALYSIS OF A MEALYBUG IN HAWAII

An analysis of a new mealybug Maconellicoccus hirsutus (Green), Homoptera: Pseudococcidae, was submitted along with recommended actions for PPQ to Mr. Ford on June 11, 1985. Results of the analysis of this Old World mealybug of cotton, legumes, grapes, and other hosts in Hawaii (PPIU--January 1985) covered three areas.

1. Potential pest threat to Hawaiian plants and to annual hosts on the continental United States is expected to be minimal.
2. Biological and practical factors allow PPQ to take positive steps on inspectional procedures and Quarantine 13 to preclude movement of the pest or its hosts from Hawaii to the U.S. mainland, and on eradication on the mainland should that be appropriate.
3. Presence of M. hirsutus could restrict exports from the continental United States.

ACTIONS FOR A THRIPS IN HAWAII

For the polyphagous Thrips palmi Karny (Thysanoptera: Thripidae) reported from Hawaii (PPIU--April 1985), Mr. Ford directed on April 18, 1985, that PPQ will

1. Assist California in conducting a detection survey for T. palmi.
- 2-3. Inform all PPQ personnel and the Hawaii Department of Agriculture to take all necessary action including predeparture inspection to prevent the movement of T. palmi to the rest of the United States except Guam where the pest occurs. Inform both of possible pathways to the continental United States.
- 4-6. Determine the adequacy of pesticides currently registered in the United States that could be used on T. palmi for regulatory and control activities and on commodities likely to be infested. For commodities where no treatments are adequate, request necessary developmental work from the Agriculture Research Service.
7. Obtain information on control, damage, host range, and biology of T. palmi from infested countries (especially Japan, India, and the Philippines).
8. Attempt no control or eradication in Hawaii.
9. Not convene a full NPAG meeting on T. palmi.

EVALUATION OF A FRUIT-PIERCING MOTH IN HAWAII

The NPAG evaluated a fruit-piercing moth Eudocima fullonia (Clerck), Lepidoptera: Noctuidae (PPIU--April 1985), on June 7, 1985. Adults feed on citrus and several other tropical and semitropical fruits. Nine points were pertinent to the recommendations.

1. A native species of Eudocima occurs in Florida but causes no damage.
2. The larvae, which are easily identified, feed on foliage.
3. Adults pierce the skin of the fruit, allowing entry of fungi and bacteria leading to rot and premature fruit drop.
4. One report states that the larvae may feed on Euphorbiaceae in South Africa (not reported in PPIU--April 1985).
5. According to the Hawaii Department of Agriculture, only Erythrina trees have yielded larval specimens. No adults have been found. Erythrina is a landscape ornamental planted far from commercial crops the adults would attack.
6. Adults of E. fullonia are reported to fly considerable distances.
7. Increased infestations can be linked with heavy rainfall.

8. In Hawaii, some egg parasitism of E. fullonia has been observed, and predaceous wasps are strongly suspected as natural enemies.

9. Regulatory procedures at ports of entry require treatment if it is found.

An analysis indicated the pest potential to U.S. agricultural crops would be miniscule because the host and tropical range of this species would limit its potential. Infestations should not affect exports or interstate movement because the adults and larvae are unlikely to contaminate agricultural commodities.

NO ACTIONS FOR MAIZE MOSAIC VIRUS

For maize mosaic virus reported from Florida (PPIU--April 1985), Mr. Ford directed on April 23, 1985, the actions that PPQ will take. Because this disease is unlikely to spread, PPQ will (1) take no survey, regulatory, or control actions at this time, and (2) communicate with D. Smith (Texas A&M University) to request that the S-70 Group expeditiously report any new detections of this pest and its early or unusual occurrence in the Gulf States.

NO ACTIONS FOR A MIRID BUG

For a mirid Rhinacloa pallidipes Maldonado, Heteroptera: Miridae, new to Florida (PPIU--April 1985), Mr. Ford directed on April 8, 1985, that PPQ will neither convene a full NPAG meeting nor take action at this time but will provide information concerning R. pallidipes to the State and Territory Agricultural Regulatory Officials.

ACTION PENDING ON A STARTHISTLE IN WASHINGTON

Regarding a starthistle infestation in Washington (PPIU--January 1985), a meeting on April 29, 1985, determined that action against Centaurea trichocephala Bieberstein ex Willdenow (Asteraceae) should wait until PPQ developed a policy for weed pests that are new to the United States and not named in the Federal Noxious Weed Act.

Please telephone identifications of plant pests new to the United States to the NPAG Executive Secretary on (301) 436-7472. Information may be sent to the NPAG Executive Secretary at Biological Assessment Support Staff, National Program Planning Staff, PPQ, APHIS, USDA, Room 633, Federal Building, Hyattsville, MD 20782. Comments improving this report are appreciated. Corrections of a substantive nature will be noted.

